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Dear Home

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Dear Home

Gabbie Mock

Dear Home,

I love you so. I love everything about you.

I love the rain. Growing up on the gulf coast accustoms you to the rain. Watching from the window, the gray clouds blanket the sky, rainwater begins to sprinkle down. Birds chirp and squirrels scurry into the trees to seek refuge from the storm ahead. The concrete sidewalk has deepened in tone – from weathered gray to asphalt black. Branches rustle and break off as the wind picks up, pattering on the windows. Comfortably, I sit inside, expecting to be alerted for flash floods and tornados, but I know nothing will come of it. My mind is at ease as the storm strengthens and I am so grateful. I love the rain.

I love the sun. The blazing heat beating down on a hot July. Skin being slowly scorched by the lack of awareness to the UV. The sky is such a true blue on these “hotter as all get out” days. The clouds are not even a thought to be had. Animals peek out from their homes in trees and bushes to join in on the sunbathing. Green grass grows tall and strong, photosynthesizing before our eyes. Single blades move, as if in a stop-motion animation film. Stepping outside, I feel the need to ask permission from the sun, the sky, and the grass to join in on the day. If they oblige, I embrace them willingly. Far too many times have I fallen asleep in the arms of the suns warm beams. I love the sun.

I love the air. “It’s not the heat that’ll get ya, it’s the humidity!” Houstonians boast to newcomers. Reaching out in the dense morning mist, the air coats the body in an uncomfortable layer of moisture. The thick, wet air, sucks you in and fills every crevasse of the body with moisture. Hair explodes in size with a cloud of frizz halo-ing the head. Even when the mist rises up as the day pushes on, the air is tainted for the rest of the day. It’s a muggy feeling, but so warm. Uncomfortably comfortable. The juxtaposition of what the air brings is where the uniqueness lies. I love the air.

I love you for everything you are Home. You are filled with flaws yet so flawless. Perfectly imperfect. Your rain, your sun, your air are equally beautiful as they are annoying, inconvenient, and just pure ugly. You keep your beauty veiled, hidden by the disgusting conditions many are quick to point out. But I see through you. I see your wonder, Home. Your humbleness inspires me. You let TV meteorologists warn about what you bring in their weather segments, you let individuals complain about you in mindless small talk, you let everyone despise you – knowing that your beauty is being looked over. I love your character, Home.

The magnitude of what you bring me is nearly indescribable, at times overwhelming. Whenever I return to you my eyes well up with tears knowing that I can center myself and regain my individuality. Whenever I leave you my eyes well up, once again, because my fondness for you continues to grow and I can't bear to leave you. Home, you have given me the best gift I could ever receive. My identity. I am so wholly and fully wrapped in you. Every inch of who I am and what I've become is because of you.

Home, I must say I am sorry. I was eager to leave you too soon. I grew impatient with your familiarity. I wanted to “experience something new” and “live out my independence” at the ripe age of 17. In retrospect, I was foolish and was pretending to want something I wasn't ready for. It seemed simple, to move an exact 888 miles away from you. From the state, the city, the only house I ever knew. Everything I'd ever known and loved. Have you ever heard the saying, “distance makes the heart grow fonder”?

Well, I must say I fully believe that now.

I will say Home, I'm glad I left you. Had I not, I don't think I ever would have been able to realize exactly how much you have done for me in the past 18 years of my time with you. Leaving you was the best thing I could have ever done. My heart yearns for your comfort every day, but with every hour I miss you, I become much more appreciative of you. Had I never left, I never would have been able to write this letter to you. I've been reading about someone very interesting, Home. Her name is Ada Limòn and she wrote a book of poetry titled *The Hurting Kind*. Her poems each have a specific focus on a place and the importance of that place to Ada. Whether it be a good place associated with great memories and nostalgia or a bad place that leads her to contemplate the state of her life and her relation to the world around her. She is the one who really inspired

me to write to you, Home. Her titular poem “The Hurting Kind” really resonates with me. She talks about lineage and being tied to a place through family history. She carries her identity through her family. I do the same, thanks to you, Home. In this poem Ada describes herself as being “the hurting kind.” “I am the hurting kind. I keep searching for proof. . .,” she states so honestly. She is sensitive to the world that is around her and is keenly aware of the relationship we forge between the natural world and ourselves. I believe that my family has possessed the ability to create this relationship with you Home. It’s a part of our lineage to see through to your beauty and wonder, making it apart of the bloodline. It is a family trait, much like how I have my dad’s nose and my mom’s teeth, to continually seek your greatness.

You have guided us all these years Home. Even when people left for college, for work, or because they thought they didn’t need you anymore, you continue to guide us. I can say with full honesty that you have guided me. I admit I thought I didn’t need you. I thought I was too good for what you had to offer, but it is so much clearer to me now, since I am always away from you, that you have given so much. In a physical and geographical sense, if I am elsewhere and I see rain fall I love it – because of you. If the sun is unbearably hot I love it – because of you. If the air is ever as humid as yours is I love it – because of you. You have taught me so much. You showed me how to love my family from afar and how to embrace the truth of my identity. You gave me the ability to do all of this. I hope my words here can summarize my great appreciation for you.

So Home, I thank you. I thank you for all this and more. I love you more than I can even express, honestly.

Miss you always, Gabbie